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21 May 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Historical Staff

SUBJECT : History of the Clandestine Services,
Preliminary Appraisal of the
Problem (Part Two)

REFERENCE : My Memorandum, Same Subject, Dated
14 May 1964

1. In the first of these related memoranda, I made two proposals which I consider a minimum response to Task 1-b of HN 1-46. This memorandum will discuss ways in which a useful historical structure might be erected upon this groundwork. It is based upon the assumption that there is a valid requirement for a Clandestine Services history adequate to fulfill the purpose described in your note of 15 October 1963:

"To consolidate a record of problems and solutions, failures and accomplishments which will put the past into historical perspective as background for the current direction of central intelligence and provide a reservoir from which particular requirements for historical material can be satisfied."

That purpose, with which I agree, will necessitate a good deal of thoughtful, time-consuming work.

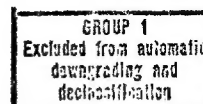
2. Within that framework, however, there is still need for somewhat more precise requirements in order to arrive at even a rough judgment of how much time and how much work. Reliable gauges are hard to find. Most ordinary histories are pretty much beside the point. Massive institutional histories such as the combat records of the armed services would provide a model far beyond the capability of any past or present concept of a CIA Historical Staff. The effort for 1946-49 and that of [redacted] and [redacted] for 1950-53 deal with quite a different quality of problem because they are concerned almost entirely with the domestic and non-action components of the agency; additionally each of them, in its own way, has inadequacies for the purpose you have set forth. The OSS War Report and the present South Vietnam study are not directly comparable, either to each other or to the present problem, but they are more to the point.

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3. The OSS Report covered a period of somewhat more than four years. It was begun in July, 1946 and submitted in finished form 5 September 1947. During that time it engaged the services of seven officers, six researchers, six consultants and part-time writers, and two clerk-stenographers, consuming a total of roughly 20 person-years. When printed in 1949 it occupied 718 double-column pages, plus illustrations, exhibits and appendices. Yet it was admittedly incomplete and partly sketchy. It suffered from the problem of coping with source material which in some respects was nearly overwhelming in volume and in other respects inadequate or lacking. There was no sense of continuity on the task force; it was a job to do and be gotten over with. It benefited from the fact that memories were fresh and the time span to be covered was relatively short.

4. The Vietnam study illumines from quite a different angle. Initially one experienced and more than usually articulate officer, with part time clerical assistance, was given eight months to complete an account of the agency's activities in Vietnam. 1950 was taken as the year of commencement, that being the time when the first [redacted] (Clandestine Services) representatives were sent to Vietnam. The deadline was set to match that of a comparable State-Defense study. The job required poring through thousands of documents, interviewing several hundreds of persons, many of them abroad, sorting and balancing masses of often conflicting material and ultimately will require, of course, the writing of the finished product. The impossibility of the task, with its limitations as set, quickly became apparent; after two months one CS researcher was detailed almost full-time to assist the officer originally assigned. Later at the request of this officer the DDI assigned an assistant to assemble the contributive material from his offices, and another CS researcher began working part time. As of this writing, the original deadline is 45 days away and the probable actual completion date at least four months more. Fortunately the State-Defense historians appear to be no better off.

5. It is clear that neither the OSS nor the Vietnam example, although pertinent, offers a solution to the overall CS history problem. The task force approach would be organizationally disruptive and probably would not produce a satisfactory product. The Vietnam approach, applied to the rest of the world, would reach astronomical proportions. It seems to me equally clear that there is no rationality in expecting that a single person, whatever his experience and

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talents, could produce anything that might honestly be described as a "history" of the CS in your definition. What then might be done short of resigning oneself to responsibility for a foreseeably inadequate job? Perhaps something, given a will in the right places.

6. I propose that much of the original drafting be done by selected officers of the several CS components, under the general guidance but not the direct jurisdiction of the Historical Staff--topics* to be chosen and draftsmen to be suggested by a small CS historical board which would have to meet no oftener than perhaps four times a year.

7. This proposal has a number of advantages, the most important of which is that it stands some chance of getting the job done. In addition:

a. It is flexible; it would provide both for the compilation over time of an accurate general history of the CS and for more detailed appendices; it also would accommodate and make use of such special studies as might be required from time to time by DDP and DCI; its scope and pace could be adjusted as circumstances required.

b. It would insure that each topic or area was treated by a person well qualified to deal with it; at the same time it should not unduly overburden any one draftsman.

c. It would not be organizationally disruptive and would not expand the Historical Staff beyond the modest proposal of reference.

d. It should provide the important elements of continuity and a sense of participation on the part of the CS components.

*In addition to country histories, any number of subject histories suggest themselves, including (in no order of importance): proprietary organizations, cover generally, relations with other agencies, especially military, State, FBI; defectors, emigres generally, uses and problems of aircraft, foreign liaison, the records problem, labor activities, etc., etc.

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8. Finally, it would leave the responsible officer of the Historical Staff with a job which would be neither a sinecure nor a ludicrous impossibility. Among his tasks:

a. Preparation of an over-all historical outline and of proposals for consideration by the historical board;

b. Editing, rewriting and rechecking first drafts as necessary and generally preparing them for a place in a finished work;

c. Writing intermediate chapters and other connective or prefatory material to provide coherence to the finished work; personally preparing such other contributions as might not be better assigned elsewhere;

d. Interviewing such historical personages as Allen Dulles and Frank Wisner, e.g., for intimate insights unobtainable elsewhere;

e. Supervising the work of the research group recommended in reference and assuring that it supports, as well as possible, other work currently in progress while pursuing its longer goal of organizing true historical archives;

f. Undertaking such evaluative functions as may be considered suitable for historical purposes; (there seems to have been considerable conflict and confusion as to whether this is an historical staff function and, if so, how to go about it).

9. It must be emphasized that this proposal will work only if it has the clear and unequivocal endorsement of DDP.

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